

**Congresswoman Betty McCollum**  
**Save the Children – Congressional Champion for Real and Lasting Change Award**  
**April 21, 2009**

Thank you for this special award and recognition.

Save the Children is an organization that works tirelessly to create lasting change in the lives of children in the United States and around the world. This is an organization I respect for your work, your commitment, and for helping our planet's most vulnerable – our children.

I would like to thank Charles McCormack for his leadership.

I would also like to recognize and thank Ambassador Michael Klosson and Ryan Quinn for their terrific work on Capitol Hill.

Every advocate, supporter, donor, board member and staff member of Save the Children also has my admiration and thanks. Your efforts are saving lives and making children a priority all around the world.

As a mother myself, I know one thing for certain, for every mother and father their child's life is precious. Parents all want the same thing – an opportunity for our children to live, to learn and to prosper in peace – and they can only do that if they are free from hunger and disease.

Conflict, chronic food insecurity, disease, dirty water, all combined with extreme poverty, place the lives of million of children in the developing world in mortal danger.

That's why we are here today. We stand here as politicians and advocates, health professionals and committed citizens with the moms and dads across the world to let them know we care. We care about them, their children and their communities.

My passion is making sure newborns, young children and their moms are healthy and grow-up safe and strong. Tragically, since I came to Congress in 2001, at least 80 million newborns and young children around the world have died from mostly preventable or easily treatable diseases – 80 million children. During the same time, four million mothers have died.

These are mostly preventable, needless deaths. Deaths due to a lack of healthcare access, resources, and political will.

We have a choice to make, an easy choice to make in my opinion. As Americans, we can maintain the status quo and watch another 80 million kids die over the next eight years, another 4 million moms.

Or, we, as a nation, can make the commitment and the investments to save the lives of children and mom in every corner of this planet.

We need to make their lives a political priority – an urgent priority. Making motherhood safe and keeping children alive are global health priorities for me, it is a priority for each of you, and we need to make it a priority for this Congress and the Obama Administration and our partners all around the world.

We have the resources and the knowledge to save the lives of children and mothers.

What we are lacking is the political will and genuine commitment to make saving these young lives a priority. That needs to change.

This award is special and will serve as a constant reminder that in the days, months, and years ahead we will make child and mother survival a priority.

Let's start by passing H.R. 1410 – *The Newborn, Child, and Mother Survival Act of 2009* – which I have introduced.

This bill will make a strong U.S. commitment to increasing child survival by creating a comprehensive strategy to deliver the assistance that mothers and children need to be healthy – before, during, and after childbirth.

Peace, security, democracy, human rights – all these values America preaches and promotes start with a mother and father not having to watch their new born baby die from diarrhea or measles or pneumonia.

Thank you for your commitment to help pass H.R. 1410. Child survival is at the top of my priority list and working together we can make the lives of children in the developing world, and children everywhere a top priority for this Congress and Administration.

Thank you again for this very special award and for making children's voices and their lives a priority.

Thank you.